



STEEL

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# WORLDS 5 COLLIDE™

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# STEEL

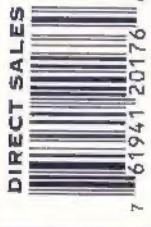
HEAVY  
METAL!



BY L. SIMONSON,  
BATISTA & FABER

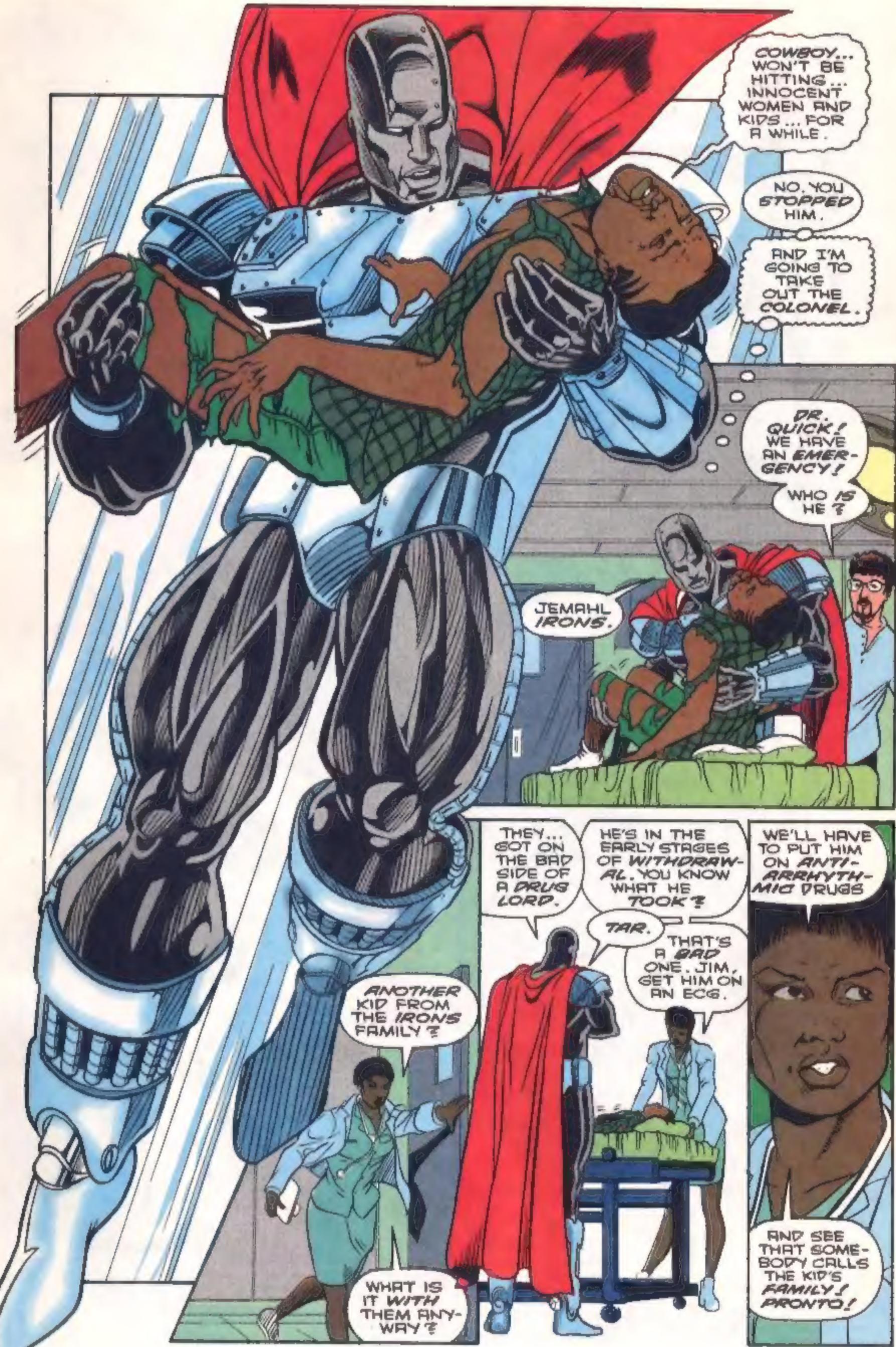


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Barista M. Janke



COLONEL  
ORDERED  
MY FAMILY  
HIT...ONE  
BY ONE ...

TO GET  
TO ME ... TO  
BREAK  
ME.

BUT I'M NOT  
THE ONE WHO'S  
GONNA BE  
BROKEN.

IT'S STEEL,  
COLONEL  
WESTON! HE'S  
BACK!

--KILL  
HIM!

GOOD!  
WE BEEN  
WAITIN'  
FOR A RE-  
MATCH!

HEY, BIG  
BIRD!  
WE JUST  
TIED A TIN  
CAN TO YER  
TRAIL! AMF!

GOOD! YOU  
SOLDIERS  
KNOW WHAT  
TO DO --

I DIDN'T  
LET JEM KILL  
COWBOY.  
  
BUT THE  
COLONEL  
IS GOING TO  
DIE FOR  
WHAT HE'S  
DONE!

# COLLISION COURSE

THROOMBY!

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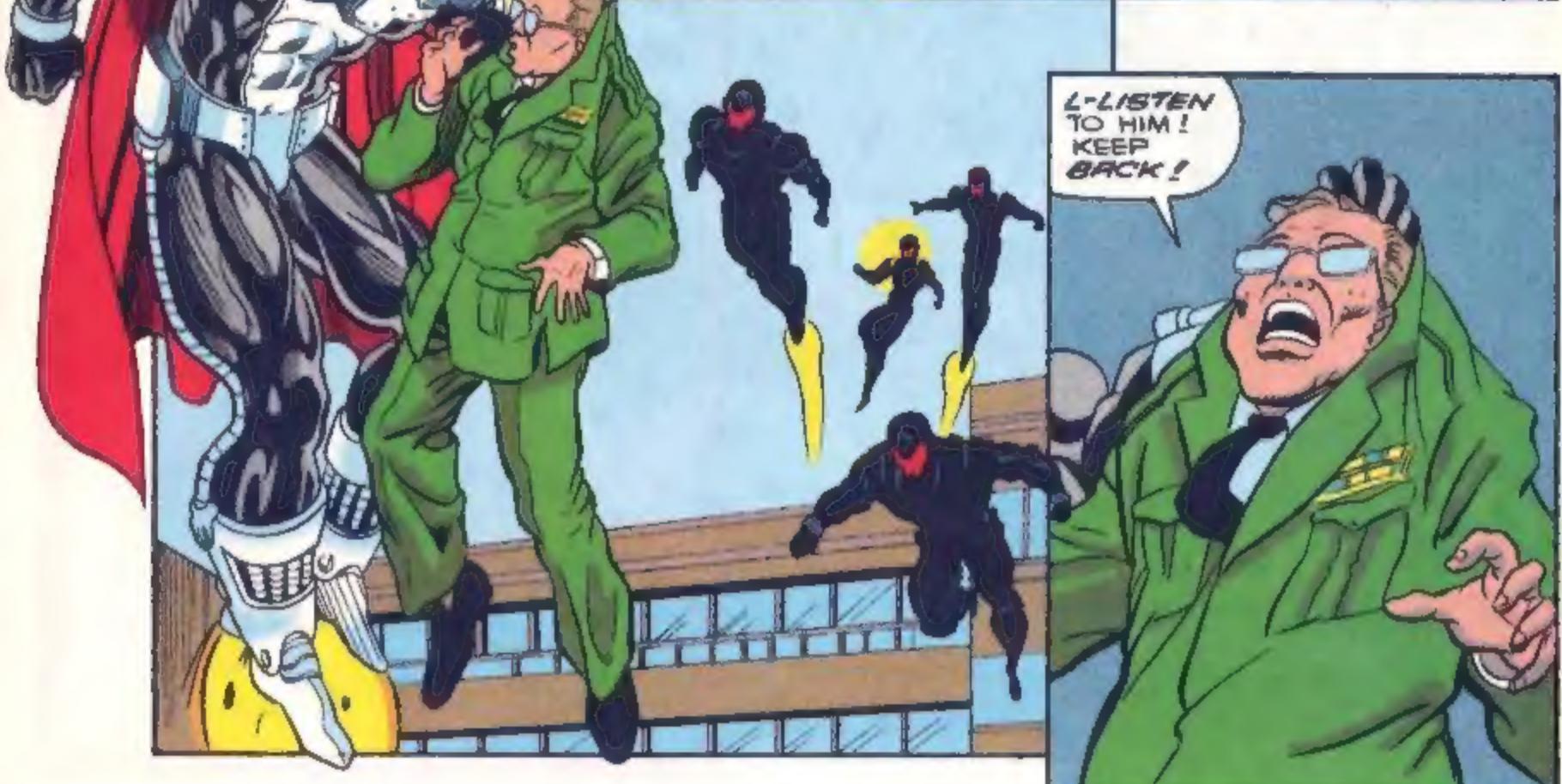
STEEL CREATED BY LOUISE SIMONSON  
AND JON BOGDANOVE

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THE HOBSONS  
BRIDGE / HALF  
COLLAPSED  
DURING A FIGHT  
BETWEEN  
SUPERBOY AND  
THE STINGER !

A BRIDGE  
THAT  
LEADS TO  
NOWHERE !

THAT'S  
OLD NEWS !  
BUT THIS ... !

THE DAILY  
PLANET IS  
DOWN ! LEXCORP  
IS RUBBLE ! ALL OF  
THE MAJOR SKY-  
SCRAPERS ...

... ONLY THE  
NEWSTIME  
BUILDING IS  
TOTALLY IN-  
TACT.

I KNEW  
THERE'D BEEN  
FIGHTING IN  
METROPOLIS ...  
I SAW THE  
NEWS REPORTS  
LIKE EVERYONE  
ELSE !

THE COLONEL  
SAYS BLACK  
OPS OPERATES  
FROM METROP-  
OLIS.

SHAUNA BERYL  
CONFIRMED IT.  
BUT SHE KNEW  
NOTHING ABOUT  
THEM BUT THE  
RUMORS.

AND THE  
RUMORS  
WERE BAD.

I WONDER  
HOW THEY  
SURVIVED  
THIS DEBACLE.

I HOPE  
THERE'S  
ENOUGH  
OF THEM  
LEFT ...

EVEN SO,  
I NEVER  
IMAGINED  
IT WOULD BE  
THIS BAD.

"...FOR ME  
TO TAKE  
APART."

SO IT WASN'T ENOUGH  
TO DESTROY MY  
AMERTEK OPERATION!  
STEEL HAS COME TO  
METROPOLIS!

HAZARD?

WHAT  
IS IT,  
SPENCER?

THERE'S A  
SCIENTIST  
THERE  
NAMED  
ALVA,  
SIR.

HE'S USING BENTSON  
TO SEND SUPER-  
POWERED BEINGS  
HERE... POSSIBLY  
BENT ON INVASION.

IT'S ABOUT THE  
POSTAL WORKER  
WHO REPORTED TO  
OUR STRESS CLINIC.

IT'S ALL  
IN... IN  
THERE,  
SIR.

I'LL  
READ IT.  
IN THE  
MEANTIME,  
IMPLANT A  
TRACER IN  
BENTSON!

IF HE'S  
EVERYTHING  
YOU SAY HE  
IS, I DON'T  
WANT TO  
LOSE  
HIM!

STEEL  
HAS COME  
HERE LOOK-  
ING FOR US,  
SHELL-  
SHOCK!

KEEP AN  
EYE ON HIM!  
IF HE GETS  
TOO CLOSE,  
WE'LL HAVE  
TO DESTROY  
HIM.

HE'S  
SHOWING  
SIGNS OF  
META-  
POWERS?

NOT...  
EXACTLY.

AT FIRST WE  
THOUGHT THAT  
HE WAS SIMPLY  
HAVING VIVID  
DREAMS.

BUT NOW...  
WE THINK  
HE'S A LIVING  
PORTAL  
TO ANOTHER  
UNIVERSE.



HE'S BACK!

AND HE'S BROUGHT  
BEINGS FROM THE  
OTHER UNIVERSE BACK  
WITH HIM! AND SUPER-  
BOY!

NO, I  
DIDN'T MEAN  
FOR US  
TO COME  
HERE!

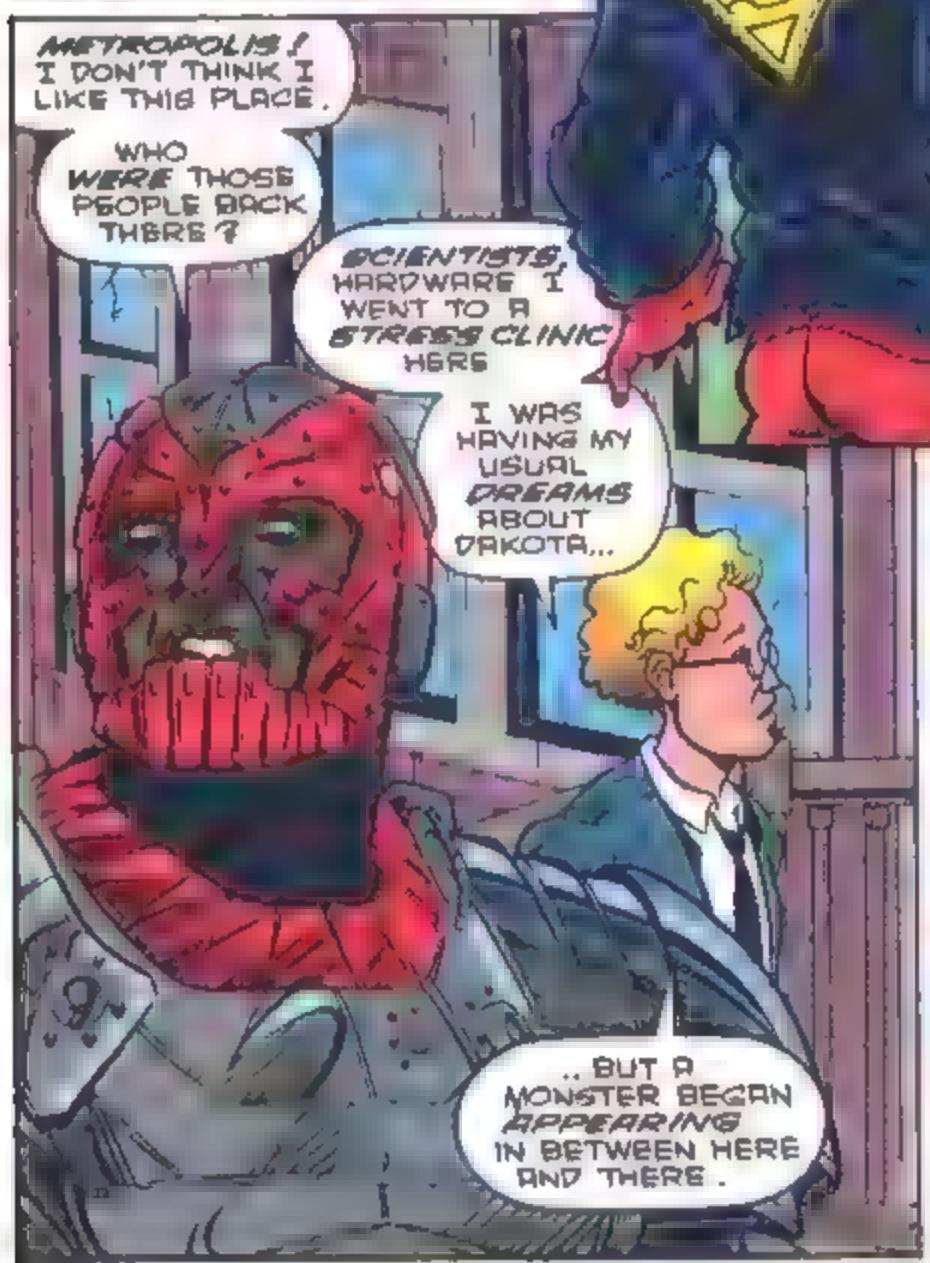
YEAH?  
WHERE  
ARE  
WE ANY-  
WAY?

DON'T ASK  
ME, SUPERBOY!  
I NEVER SAW  
THIS PLACE BE-  
FORE IN MY LIFE!

UH-OH!  
FEEL THAT  
TINGLE OF  
ENERGY?

THAT  
MEANS WE'RE  
LEAVING!

STOP  
THEM!



THINK ABOUT IT, MR. BENTSON. YOU CAN'T REALLY BELIEVE METROPOLIS IS REAL.

YOU'RE DREAMING METROPOLIS... AND SOMEHOW, YOU DREAMED US INTO IT!

HEY! I'M FROM METROPOLIS SO WHAT DOES THAT MAKE ME?

A FIGMENT OF HIS IMAGINATION.

YOU'RE OUT, ROCKET! HE MIGHT'VE IMAGINED A LUSCIOUS BABE LIKE YOU...

...BUT HE SURE WOULDN'T BOTHER TO IMAGINE ME!

EXCELLENT.

I HAVE HIM, HAZARD!  
ANDERSON STREET IN HOBBS BAY.

BENTSON HAS BEEN IN HIS DREAM STATE AND AWRY IN METROPOLIS FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES, MR. ALVA.

GOOD! SEND A SQUAD TO RETRIEVE HIM! NOW, BEFORE, SOMEHOW, HE SLIPS AWAY AGAIN!

EMPLOY THE NANO MACHINES. FORCE HIM TO WAKE UP!

I WANT HIM IN DAKOTA -- SOLID, AWARE, AND FULLY UNDER MY CONTROL.

HE'S FADING!  
MR. BENTSON!  
WAIT!

INCOMING!  
TEN TO ONE,  
THOSE GOONS  
ARE HERE TO  
RETRIEVE  
BENTSON!

THAT'S A  
NEURAL  
DISRUPTOR  
METH--SIMILAR  
TO MY OWN!  
EVADE IT!

TAKE IT  
LIGHT,  
HARDWARE!  
ALL I HAVE  
TO DO IS  
TOUCH  
THE THING.

Jet pack!  
Deployed.

SNAP!

...AND--  
TELEKINET-  
ICALLY  
SPARKING--  
IT'S A  
TANGLE  
OF BROKEN  
WIRES!

STAY SOLID,  
BENTSON  
AND HANG IN  
THERE!

HELP!

YOU TWO  
HELP  
BENTSON!

I'LL  
DISABLE  
THE  
FLYING  
GOONS!

BLAM!

NINE  
BLOCKS  
AWAY...

DIDN'T COME  
HERE TO ACT AS  
PART OF A RESCUE  
SQUAD, BUT THE  
PEOPLE OF METROPOLIS  
NEED MY HELP!

LOCATIONS  
SHAUNA GAVE  
ME HAVE BEEN  
DESTROYED ANY-  
WAY!



Omni-cannons  
Deployed.



WE'VE  
GOT  
HER, STEEL!  
THANKS!

BLACK  
OPS WILL  
JUST HAVE  
TO WAIT  
UNTIL--

BLAM!

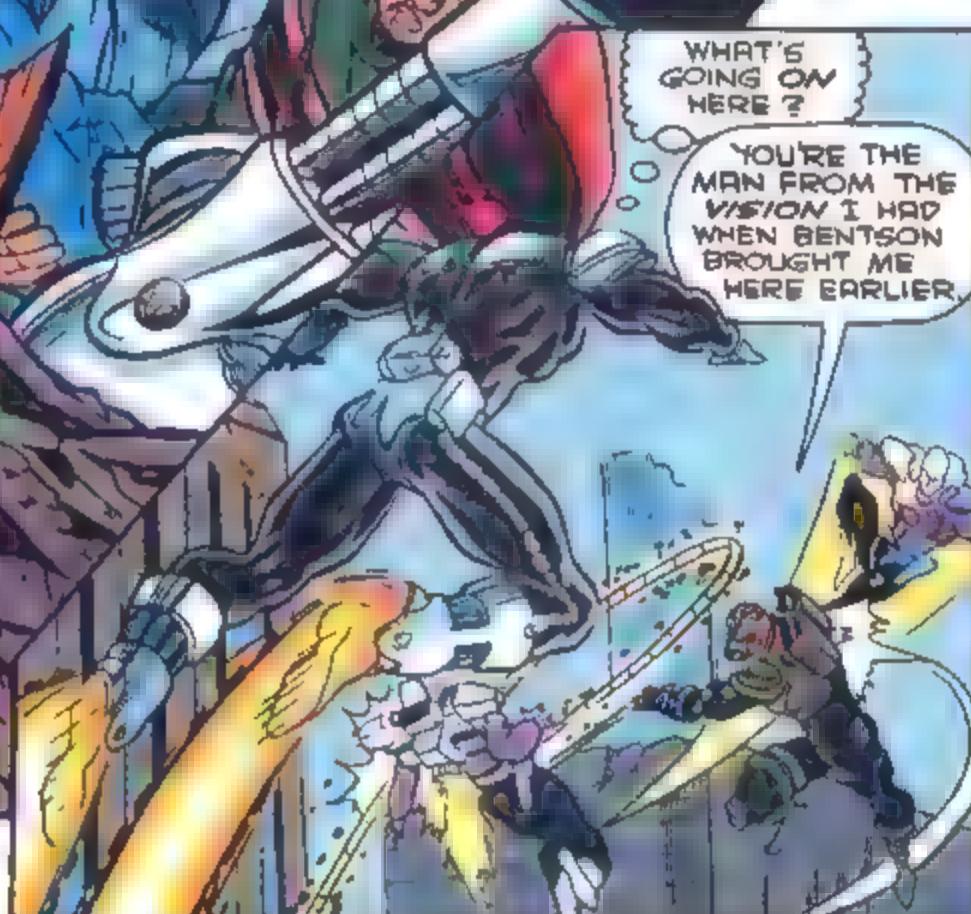
GUN-  
FIRE!

WHAT'S  
GOING ON  
HERE?

YOU'RE THE  
MAN FROM THE  
VISION I HAD  
WHEN BENTSON  
BROUGHT ME  
HERE EARLIER.

FELT THEN  
LIKE YOU WERE  
MY OPPOSITE  
NUMBER...

...AND  
HERE YOU ARE--  
JUST ANOTHER  
PUNK FOR  
HIRE!



UUNPH! I  
HURT!  
WHO IS  
THIS GUY?

ONE  
DOWN...  
ONE GOON  
TO GO!

Neural net  
Deployed.

SPIKE  
BOUNCED  
OFF HIS ARMOR!  
DAMN!

MARAUDERS  
HAVE BEEN  
PREYING ON  
METROPOLIS'S HELP-  
LESS FOR TOO  
LONG NOW!

YOUR  
RAMPAGE  
IS OVER!

COME ON,  
TIN-MAN!  
GIVE ME THE  
EXCUSE!

"BENTSON IS FIGHTING US. MR ALVA IF HE KEEPS THIS UP, HE'LL KILL HIMSELF!"

SMART THING WOULD BE TO FLY MR. BENTSON OUT OF HERE!

WE CAN'T! HE KEEPS FLICKERING IN AND OUT. WE'D DROP HIM!

AT LEAST HARDWARE HAS HIS CONFLICT UNDER CONTROL!

THERE'S OBVIOUSLY A MISUNDERSTANDING!

NOW ABOUT I PROTECT BENTSON WHILE YOU FLY UP AND STOP THEM.

HEY, WAIT A MINUTE! THAT'S STEEL HE'S FIGHTING! STEEL'S MY FRIEND!

THEY'RE BOTH GOOD GUYS?

YOU GOT IT!

HEY, HARDWARE! STEEL! GUYS!!

THEY'RE NOT LISTENING!



BENTSON'S FLICKERING, BUT THE CLAMPS SHOULD HOLD HIM HERE PHYSICALLY.

BOSS'LL KILL US IF WE LOSE HIM!



YOU WANT IT, YOU GOT IT! YOU'RE GONE!



THEY  
TELEPORTED  
AWAY!??!!



BENTSON IS FLICKERING IN AND OUT OF OUR REALITY, MR. ALVA.

BUT PHYSICALLY, HE IS IN DAKOTA, MORE OR LESS.

FUNDING SCIENTIST VOLUNTEERS IN HIGH-STRESS ENVIRONMENTS ...

... IS A BRILLIANT WAY TO FIND METAHUMANS, SIR. AND THIS ONE'S A DOOZY!

WE JUST CAN'T QUITE GET HIM TO WAKE UP!

PHYSICALLY HE'S IN METROPOLIS ... MORE OR LESS. BUT HE'S ALSO OVER THERE.

SO WE TURN UP THE POWER. ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, HE WILL WAKE UP!

WE HAVE SOME TAPES OF HIS EARLIER CONTACT...

...BUT WE THINK THE OTHER SIDE... WHOEVER THEY ARE ...

...IS JAMMING FURTHER TRANSMISSION.

YOU BELIEVE WE'RE IN TECHNICAL TUG OF WAR FOR BENTSON'S SOUL, THEN?

I DO.

TURN UP THE JUICE, SPENCER! ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, WE'LL MAKE SURE HE WAKES UP IN METROPOLIS!

HE'S AWAKE! WE'VE GOT HIM!

HE'S AWAKE! WE'VE GOT HIM! WE'VE WON!

KRAKA-HOOOMBRUMBLE!!!

RUMBLETHOOMB

WHAT'S THAT? AN EXPLOSION...? AN EARTH-QUAKE?

WHATEVER IT WAS, IT SOUNDED LIKE THE GATES OF HELL BLEW OPEN!

WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S SO DENSE MY X-RAY VISION CAN barely PENETRATE IT.

I CAN MAKE OUT THE SHADOWS OF OTHER PYLONS!

IT LOOKS LIKE THE BRIDGE HAS BEEN RE-STORED--

--WITH DIFFERENT ARCHITECTURE LEADING AWAY FROM METROPOLIS AND INTO THE MIST!

I CAN'T SEE WHAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE.

WHAT'S THAT ROILING IN THE AIR AROUND IT? DUST? OR MIST?

THE HOGSNECK BRIDGE!

A BRIDGE RESTORED! THAT SHOULD BE GOOD NEWS... RIGHT?

SO WHY DO I HAVE THE FEELING THINGS ARE GONNA GET BAD REAL FAST??

CONTINUED IN  
**BLOOD SYNDICATE**  
# 16!  
ON SALE NOW!

# STEEL

**PREVIOUSLY IN STEEL:** The Irons family has been subject to one tragedy after another: a shooting, a mugging, a hit-and-run "accident." Seeking revenge, young Jemahl Irons took the deadly TAR drug, but was forced to do battle with his uncle, Steel. Now, Steel has seen enough. He's putting an end to violence once and for all...even if it means killing the Colonel in cold blood.

Meanwhile, in Metropolis, a man named Fred Bentson has checked himself into a dream clinic. It seems that Fred has been having nightmares about a place called Dakota...but these nightmares are all too real, and through Fred, Steel will soon find himself in the midst of a battle to save two worlds...

Hail, Metalheads!

This is it, this is it, THIS IS IT! Finally, the perfect comic book. An inexperienced super-hero fighting in the 'hood. Perfect! Exquisite art by Chris Batista and a good, solid story by Jon Bogdanove and Louise Simonson. One thing's missing, however: a fly honey (that's "babe" for the dialect impaired). Maybe she could really work for Amertek, pretend she's falling in love with John Henry, betray him but really like him, save him, and you can write the rest from there!

Jason Jeffers  
St. James, Barbados

What's left to write, Jase? You've pretty much summed up a whole storyline right there! Anyway, we'll see what we can do about getting a "fly honey" into John's life...but maybe not one as wicked as you've described. Thanks for writing!

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Steel-workers:

I must admit that I was skeptical about the idea of a STEEL ongoing series. The "Reign of the Supermen" was a great arc, but I never really felt like I would need to put out \$1.50 a month for any of them once it was over. Nevertheless, I usually pick up a first issue just for its speculative value, which I did with STEEL. But, upon seeing the names on the cover, I was disappointed that Bog wasn't doing the art.

That is, until I saw the insides.

The art was great! No, incredible! I mean, this was work that Neal Adams or George Pérez should be proud of. I was really impressed. And if you can

believe it, I was more impressed by the coloring than I was by the pencils and inks. The airbrushing made the fabrics and skin tones much more believable. Way to go, Gina!

Skin coloring in comics, for so long, has been a brown blot, a pink blot, or a yellow blot. The way the African-American skin is colored is much more realistic than anyone has done with Caucasian tones. We poor white folk have all our veins and muscle fibers showing through our translucent skin. Gina's use of tones and colors is much more attractive than the typical black-inked shadows. I especially enjoyed the fire-light in the armor-forging scene.

I won't comment on the writing yet, because I don't think you can judge that after only one issue, but I have high hopes. As for the lettering, I must confess with brutal honesty that I can't really tell one letterer's work from another's; but I think that poor, awkward lettering would stick out like a sore thumb, and that certainly wasn't the case here. Good work!

Lastly, being a Baltimoron...I mean Baltimorean...I like the setting of the story, and I'd love to see Steel venture 35 miles northwest at least once during his run. I guess it's obvious that I'll be back for issue #2, although my wallet is screaming at me.

John A. Sigmon  
Baltimore, MD

It's not screaming at you...it's screaming with you. As for Steel's visiting Baltimore, anything's possible, but he will expect you to take him out to lunch when he gets there!

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Steel Slingers,

Hah, oh boy, are you guys in trouble! I was looking in my Overstreet Guide and discovered something—there was another title called STEEL, specifically STEEL: THE INDESTRUCTIBLE MAN! Your gooses are cooked! Just wait until I send notice to...hold on...let me find it...DC Comics! You'll be coughing up the dough then, let me tell you! Of course, for a small fee (unmarked tens and twenties, no checks, please) I can be persuaded to "forget" said notice.

Ahem.

In a more serious light, I just can't rave enough about STEEL. John Henry Irons is one of the best characters to come along in a long time, all the more so by being a rarity in this

## DC COMICS

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age of brutal, psychopathic butchers masquerading as heroes: a hero with morals, scruples, and a conscience who has actually become successful enough to get his own book. I can't argue that his ties to Superman's return helped in that regard, but in any case, it's always good to see a new character who doesn't measure his success in some "crusade of vengeance" by his body count. Steel is different. He doesn't really want to be a hero, but feels an intense responsibility to right the wrongs he has caused (directly and indirectly). In his own past, armed with his brains, the tools created by that brain, and a strength of character worthy of that other Man of Steel.

The only disappointment comes with the new, more streamlined Steel armor. The chest plate looks awfully bare. I can understand Steel's reasons for not wearing the S-shield, though, ironically, I only think it makes him more worthy of it.

Until Steel trades in his hammer for an electric toothbrush...

Fritz Baugh  
Indianapolis, IN

Hey, how'd you find out about the electric toothbrush? There go our big storyline plans for the next six issues! Now what're we gonna do?

Seriously, though, a lot of thought (and I mean a lot of thought) went into deciding whether to put an S-shield on Steel. Ultimately, it seemed to be much more in character for John Henry to want to leave the S-shield off. In his eyes, there can only be one, true Superman. We hope that in the coming months, the new armor will grow on you as much as it will on John Henry.

As far as the original Steel is concerned...blackmail-schmack-mail...we remember him well and would like to think that he'd be proud of John Henry had he only known him.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Sirs,

I have been following the rise of the "Supermen" and have been very impressed by the quality in which these new heroes have emerged. I think that one of the finest will be Steel, because he is not trying to fill someone's boots by taking over their name. In my opinion, he is a very fresh and feasible character, and I think he will make the grade.

There is one question that puzzles me as I read and reread the first issue and even the previous appearances of John Henry Irons. Regarding men's earrings, I was always brought up thinking that "left is right and right is wrong." My question is that I'm wondering if you are trying to tell us something about Hank's personal life, or is it that I'm just outdated in my thinking? It wasn't until I read the novel *The Death and Life of Superman* by Roger Stern that I came to understand Capt. Maggie Sawyer's sexual preference was other than the "traditional standards." Are we to assume the same for Dr. Irons? With his physique, I would not want to question him about his "manhood" face to face for fear that my face might be ripped off, so I thought I would question the people who might be responsible for this and hope that my face would remain intact. If you could, please clear up the misconceptions and my ignorance for me.

Thank you for the fine work!

Harlan J. Bryan  
Springfield, MO

*It's okay, Harlan, your face is safe. Several people have written in and asked the same question. You asked the most politely (thanks), so here goes...*

I, too, grew up hearing that old "right is wrong and wrong is right" thing. (I'd like to think that "right" and "wrong" are being used in the most figurative sense possible). Anyway, if such a thing was ever true...if the placement of one's earring was ever an indication of a person's preference...I think that that stopped being a statement a long time ago. Nowadays, men (and women) wear earrings in one ear, or both; they have pierced noses, among other things. I wear two earrings in my left ear. What does that mean? Nothing, really, I just like the way it looks. As far as John Henry is concerned, I think this matters in comics as much as it does in the real world. Is he a good guy? Yes. Is he somebody you'd want to be friends with? Yeah, sure (as long as you don't mind getting hit by a car or shot at once in a while). Is he gay or straight? Doesn't really matter, does it?

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Frank,

I just want to thank you and the hosts of STEEL for a fabulous first issue. I usually wait for another three or four more issues before I really get into a comic and commit to purchasing it. But the entire staff of STEEL showed me that to do that would have been an unbearable mistake. The storyline was great from the very beginning.

I just want to say if Chris, Rich, Pat or Gina discontinues adding their dimension to STEEL, there will be some serious repercussions. The scenes on page 2 (John getting off

the bus), pages 6 and 7 (John battling the thugs), and page 22 (the man called Steel) were the essence of what I think good comic art should be. Hey, Chris...keep up the good work.

Finally, the cover art was fantastic (what more need I say?).

Until Steel turns in his hammer for one of Gramma Bess's frying pans, I'll be in the pages of STEEL.

Michael Johnson  
Winston-Salem, NC

*Oh, brother! First Fritz Baugh finds out about the electric toothbrush, and now you've found out about the new frying pan weapons!!! Can nothing stay secret around here??*

Anyway, thanks for the compliments.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear DC,

Issue #1 of STEEL was fantastic. Chris Batista and Rich Faber did an excellent job of creating a realistic view of our nation's capital. Jon and Louise did their jobs almost too well. You see, I live within 20 minutes of Washington, D.C., and some of the scenes created in this book reminded me of some of the stories I've been told. There are guns in my own school (not anything near a Toastmaster, but scary in other ways).

Anyway, back to the book. The artwork was incredible, and I can't remember seeing anything like it before. Good job on creating new characters that I know will play major roles in the upcoming issues. Steel's new costume is great, and page 21 reminded me of an issue I read not long ago...something like MAN OF STEEL #22.

Keep up the great work!

Jeff Schwab  
Clifton, VA

*Thanks, Jeff. It's pretty sad that you have to go to a school where kids are walking around with guns. It's a scary thing, to be sure. When I was a kid the worst thing anybody ever did was chew gum in class, and now twelve-year-olds are shooting bullets at each other. Can't they all just relax and read a comic book?*

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear STEEL writers,

I guess you could call me a Marvel maniac. I have in my possession nearly a thousand comics. 95% are Marvel, 5% are DC. This is the first time, however, that I've written to a comic book.

I read STEEL #1 and I loved it. I have the entire collection of the death and return of Superman, which got me really interested in the man who would be "Steel."

I have faith in this comic and this character. Some things I'd like to point out, though: This character

and storyline remind me of a certain favorite Marvel character of mine, Iron Man.

Both Steel and Iron Man are the world's most knowledgeable expert on strength-enhancing superarmor. Both created the armor in the first place. Both have had their technology stolen by some evil individual(s). Both feel totally responsible for all the sorrow their technology has brought and both are determined to stop what has fallen into evil hands.

What I really like about Steel, as opposed to Iron Man, is that without his armor, John is still one hell of a tough guy. I'd really love to know how strong Steel actually is. Seeing how much "butt" he can kick and how much punishment he can take, I don't think Iron Man would want to mess with him. And speaking of Iron Man, other qualities of his that Steel has are his resourcefulness and quick thinking.

Anyway, wicked work, you guys! Keep up the good work!

Tony Stark

address withheld by request

*Who, exactly, is this "Iron Man"?*

*Seriously, though, Mr. (ahem) Stark, the comparisons between Steel and Iron Man, at least early on, were to be expected. But the bottom line is, they're both guys in armor. So is Hardware. So is War Machine. So is Rocket Red. What makes all of these heroes vastly different is who they are out of the armor...and what makes them put it on in the first place. I think that, based upon what you'll be seeing in the coming months, you'll agree 100% that Steel and Iron Man are nothing alike! Stay tuned!*

**NEXT UP:** "Worlds Collide" continues as Superman encounters a dangerous group of Dakota Bang-Babies from the other side of the bridge. Will the Blood Syndicate finish the job that Lex Luthor started? Will Superman be defeated by these strange visitors from another world? Check out BLOOD SYNDICATE #16, on sale now, for the butt-kickin' battle.

## WORLDS COLLIDE: THE CHECKLIST

- Chapter 1: MAN OF STEEL #35
- Chapter 2: HARDWARE #17
- Chapter 3: SUPERBOY #6
- Chapter 4: ICON #15
- Chapter 5: STEEL #6
- Chapter 6: BLOOD SYNDICATE #16
- Chapter 7: WORLDS COLLIDE #1
- Chapter 8: SUPERBOY #7
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- Chapter 10: MAN OF STEEL #36
- Chapter 11: ICON #18
- Chapter 12: STEEL #7
- Chapter 13: BLOOD SYNDICATE #17
- Chapter 14: STATIC #14